

Caring for Your Tall Fescue

March through May

The following information has been adapted directly from NC State's internet publication TurfFiles. The information has been filtered to provide the information you need to complement the services we provide for you. If you wish to view this reference, go to <http://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu/pubs/management/ag431.html> . You can also reference TurfFiles at www.turffiles.ncsu.edu .

Mowing

Tall Fescue lawns should be 3.0" and before it reaches 5.0" this time of the year. Mow only one-third of the total unmowed height of your lawn. Recycle your clippings since twenty-five per cent of your nutrients are in the clippings. Even if you get behind with your mowing collect the clippings for mulch. But don't send them to the landfill.

Watering

Rainfall or irrigation requirements this time of year is one inch per week. As the spring warms up soil should be moist four to six inches below the surface. If you have a clay soil, your soil will not accept water as quickly. If you see runoff, delay your watering to allow it to soak and then resume your irrigation until you achieve the depth or amount needed. Use a rain gauge to determine rainfall amounts. You can also use a pan or pie tin to collect irrigation water. Then calculate the amount your sprinkler delivers to achieve the weekly rainfall you would need to augment the week's rainfall. A good watering program will help keep your lawn healthy and mitigate pest, disease, and weed problems during periods of excessive heat and drought.

Thatch

Leave thatch this time of year to prevent evaporation of moisture.

Aeration

Aeration is not suggested for this time of year for moisture preservation.

Seeding

Some heavily shaded bare lawns may benefit from seeding. However, there is no guarantee that seedlings will survive the heat and drought normally expected in summer.

Pests

White grub worm control is best performed during two periods: 1) March/April prior to hatching into beetles and 2) August after eggs have been laid and grubs are closest to the soil surface. The presence of moles is an indicator that you may have grubs since they are an excellent food source.

Check for Red Imported Fire Ant mounds. It is important to treat these pests as soon as you discover them to prevent liability risks and to slow their spread to other areas. Fire ants damage plants and have been known to chew through power and communication lines.